



Attorney General Jon Bruning

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 20, 2009, 5:20 p.m.

Contact: Leah Bucco-White  
402-471-2067

[Leah.bucco-white@nebraska.gov](mailto:Leah.bucco-white@nebraska.gov)

## Nebraska Cracks Down on Fraudulent Telemarketer

**Note: A sound bite on this topic is available at: <http://www.ago.ne.gov>**

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced Nebraska reached a settlement with professional solicitor/telemarketer, Community Support Inc (CSI). CSI, based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, solicits funds from consumers in Nebraska and nearly every state on behalf of over 35 charitable clients. CSI kept at least 83 percent of all money donated, and in many cases kept 90 percent of all donations, leaving only 10 percent for the charity.

“Some telemarketers prey on consumers’ generosity and will stop at nothing to scam them out of their hard-earned money,” said Bruning. “Nebraska is working with other states to crackdown on this illegal behavior.”

Court documents allege CSI had a pattern of consistently violating many states’ laws over many years. According to the complaint, CSI misrepresented how much of the funds actually went to the charity, misrepresented what would be spent in the consumer’s local community, its solicitors falsely claimed to be law enforcement or veterans, and falsely claimed people had made pledges when they did not.

As part of the settlement agreement reached with Nebraska and 32 states, CSI agreed to stop all illegal and objectionable activity. The company must make certain records available to states upon request, be more responsible for its employees’ training and conduct and representations made to consumers. Violations of the settlement may result in penalties of \$10,000 per violation.

The agreement was announced in conjunction with “Operation False Charity.” Attorneys General, the Federal Trade Commission, Secretaries of State and other law enforcers in 48 states are cracking down on charity fraud bringing 76 enforcement actions against fundraising companies, nonprofits and individuals, many claiming to help police, firefighters and veterans.

Here are some tips to help protect consumers against charity fraud:

- Check out an organization before donating. Some phony charities use names, seals and logos that look or sound like well known, legitimate organizations.
- Donate to charities with a track record and a history. Charities that spring up overnight may disappear just as quickly.

- If you have any doubt about whether you've made a pledge or a contribution, check your records. If you don't remember making the donation or pledge, resist the pressure to give.
- Do not send or give cash donations. For security and tax record purposes, it's best to pay by check made payable to the charity.
- Ask for a receipt showing the amount of your contribution.
- Recognize that the words veterans or military families in an organization's name don't necessarily mean that veterans or the families of active-duty personnel will benefit from your donation.

Some Web sites where consumers can check out charities:

- [www.nasconet.org](http://www.nasconet.org) - look up and contact your state's charities regulator for more information
- [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org) – Guidestar
- [www.bbb.us/charity](http://www.bbb.us/charity) - Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance
- [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org) – CharityNavigator
- [www.charitywatch.org](http://www.charitywatch.org) - American Institute of Philanthropy

Consumers can also contact the Attorney General's Office at 1-800-727-6432 to request a charities brochure to track their charitable giving.

###

